

Mexican Air Travelers to
CALIFORNIA

Prepared for
California Tourism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MEXICAN AIR TRAVELERS TO CALIFORNIA

Total Market. Of 1,668,000 Mexican air visitors to the U.S., 29.7%, or 496,000 visited California in 2005. This represented a 21.3% increase from 2004, and was the highest volume of yearly visitation recorded. Mexican air arrival volumes at California ports-of-entry were showing a decrease in 2006 after increasing from 2004 to 2005.

	Visitors to CA from Mexico via Air (est.)	Mexico Air to CA as % of total US
1994	451,000	31.5%
1995	256,000	28.8%
1996	276,000	25.3%
1997	304,000	23.3%
1998	381,000	26.8%
1999	328,000	22.0%
2000	452,000	26.0%
2001	463,000	30.6%
2002	392,000	27.3%
2003	439,000	32.3%
2004	409,000	27.4%
2005	496,000	29.7%

Main Destination. Most of Mexican air visitors to California (90%) reported California was the main destination of their U.S. trip. Leisure air visitors from Mexico reported a similar percentage (88%).

Purpose of Trip. Among all Mexican air visitors to California in 2005, 60% reported vacation/holiday was one of their major reasons for traveling. Other reasons for traveling included visiting friends/relatives (47%) and business (18%).

Visitors often report multiple purposes of trip. Most leisure air visitors from Mexico (72%) reported visiting California in 2005 on vacation/holiday. The proportion of leisure visitors who were visiting friends and relatives was 51%.

Port of Entry. A combined total of 71% of Mexican air visitors to California entered the U.S. through west coast ports. More than half (59%) entered through Los Angeles, followed by San Francisco (11%).

Top Metropolitan Areas Visited in California. Mexican air visitors to California in 2005 tended to center their trip itineraries on the major cities of Los Angeles (49%), San Francisco (35%) and San Diego (13%).

Leisure/Recreation Activities. The top leisure and recreation activities reported by visitors by air from Mexico, whether traveling for business or leisure, were shopping and dining in restaurants. Mexican air travelers are less likely to sightsee, visit amusement/theme parks and tour the countryside than overseas visitor groups.

Advance Trip Decision. Mexican air travelers to California reported making their trip decision 54 days in advance of their trip. This is a shorter average trip planning time than the 90 days reported by all overseas visitors to California. Mexican leisure air travelers made their trip decision 59 days in advance of their trip.

Means of Booking Air Trip. About half of Mexican air travelers to California (53%) booked their air trip via a travel agent. This result was in line with major overseas markets to California (57%).

Means of Booking Lodging. About 40% of all Mexican air visitors and 38% of Mexican leisure air travelers pre-booked their lodging predominantly via a travel agent. In 2005 7% of Mexican air travelers reported booking lodging with hotels/motel directly. About 37% of leisure Mexican air travelers used travel agents to book their accommodations and 4% booked with the hotels/motels directly.

Trip Information Sources. Among Mexican air visitors to California, the most frequently mentioned sources of information included: a travel agency (48%), followed by direct information from airlines (35%), personal computer (24%), corporate travel departments (8%), and friends/relatives (6%).

Length of Stay. Mexican air visitors stayed an average of 8.3 nights in the U.S. and 6.2 nights in California. In comparison the length of stay for all overseas visitors to California was 10.6 nights in the state.

Sex and Age. Men comprised 53.5% of Mexican air travelers to California with a median age of 48 years. This is somewhat older than the median age reported by all overseas visitors to California (42 years). Women represented 46.5% of all Mexican air travelers to California in 2005, with a median age of 37 years compared to 40 years reported by all overseas female visitors. Looking at leisure travel only, about 47% of Mexican leisure air travelers to California are men and 53% are women.

Travel Party Size. While most (87%) of Mexican air travel groups consist of adults only, 13% of Mexican air travel groups to California include children. The mean travel party size for all Mexican air visitors to the state was 1.7 people and the party size for leisure visitors was also 1.7 people.

Annual Household Income. Visitors from Mexico by air reported lower median household incomes (\$39,800) than overseas visitors to California (\$78,800). The median household income of Mexico leisure air visitors to California was (\$34,600).

Accommodations. Over three-fourths of Mexican air visitors (76%) to California chose a hotel or motel as their primary type of accommodation during their stay in 2005. This proportion is close to the 79% reported by all overseas visitors to California. Mexican air leisure visitors also reported a high propensity to stay in a hotel/motel (67%). One-third (33%) of all Mexican air visitors and 42% of Mexican leisure air visitors stayed in a private home in 2005.

Use of Prepaid Package. In 2006, 8% of Mexican air visitors and 7% of Mexican leisure air visitors used prepaid packages.

Expenditures. Visitors to California from Mexico by air spent an estimated 538 million dollars in California in 2005. Mexican air visitors were spending an average of \$175 per day during their visit, more than most other major overseas visitor groups. Leisure visitors from Mexico by air spent an average of \$157 per day. Each visitor to California from Mexico by air spent an average of \$1,085 in the state, and each leisure visitor spent an average of \$973 in California.

Average International Airfare. Average international airfare to the U.S. was \$1,009 for Mexican air visitors and \$1,041 for leisure Mexican air visitors.